

tribution to classical studies was his series of cruises for students of all ages, undertaken when such facilities were rare and not easy to arrange; they brought him into personal contact with a wide variety of acquaintances, and opened what was then a new aspect of classical study.

J. L. MYRES.

Prof. V. R. Williams

WE learn with deep regret of the death of Prof. Vasili Robertovich Williams, professor of soil studies in the Timiriachev Academy of Agriculture, and well known to soil investigators for his important contributions to agricultural science.

Williams was born in Moscow in 1863, the son of an American constructional engineer who had settled in Russia in 1854 and married a Russian lady. He studied at the old Petrovsky Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, to which after a period of postgraduate work in Paris with Pasteur, he returned as lecturer. In 1894 the Institute was replaced by the Agricultural Institute of Moscow and he was appointed assistant professor of soils and agriculture. In 1906 he became director of the Institute, and after the Revolution, when it was reorganized as the Timiriachev Academy of Great Socialist Agriculture, he was again made director though afterwards a political head was chosen in accordance with the policy then prevailing.

From the outset, Williams's soil work centred around the organic constituents: he never lost his interest in these. Only last August he showed me a colourless crystalline organic substance which he had extracted from the soil and to which he attached great importance. Like other Russian soil workers after the Revolution, he did a good deal of soil surveying and he acquired an extensive knowledge of soil utilization and crop production in Russia. On the applied side his most important activity was his keen advocacy of grass leys in the rotation. Russian agriculture was, until recently, mainly based on variants of the old three field system, fallow, winter corn, spring corn. Williams knew how greatly the agriculture of Western Europe had improved when a clover or grass and clover crop was inserted between the corn crops, and he strenuously urged that this should be done in Russia. The coming of collectivization gave an opportunity for a change of system, and the need for increasing the animal population after the devastating losses of livestock at first incurred furnished the justification for strenuous efforts to ensure ample production of fodder crops. So Williams used all his great influence in the U.S.S.R. to extend the culture of grasses and clovers and showed that, not only would more cattle food be produced, but also the soil fertility would be increased and the danger of erosion lessened.

In his later years, Williams devoted much time to the building up of his soil museum, and on each of my recent visits to the Institute he personally demonstrated its chief features: it included a large number of typical profiles with specimens or illustrations of the flora native to each type, and charts showing the most suitable kind of agriculture.

His soil work is described in his book, "Soil Science", first published in 1914 and revised in 1920.

Williams was afflicted with a paralysis which impeded his activities but never damped his enthusiasm. Like others of the older school of Russian scientific workers, he had a good knowledge of a Western language so that conversation and discussion were always easy. In his case the language was English, learned from his father and never forgotten. His work was much appreciated in Russia and he was given the highest awards open to Soviet citizens: the Order of Lenin, a seat in the Supreme Soviet, and membership of the Academy of Sciences; more important still, the deep respect, softened by affection, of many past students now engaged in agricultural organization in Russia. One of the pavilions of the great agricultural exhibition at Moscow is adorned with a very large mural painting showing him at work in his department.

E. JOHN RUSSELL.

Mr. G. Eumorfopoulos

WE regret to record the death at the age of seventy-six of Mr. George Eumorfopoulos, which took place on December 19. Eumorfopoulos had long been known as a great collector and skilled connoisseur of objects of Oriental art and more especially of the art of the Chinese.

George Eumorfopoulos was born in Liverpool in 1863. Until 1934 he was a member of the well-known firm of Ralli Bros. His career as a collector began with English and Continental porcelain, but he soon turned to Oriental art, and was one of the first collectors to give special attention to pieces of the earlier Chinese dynasties—Chou, Han, T'ang and Sung. In this field his collection for the beauty, rarity, and historic and archaeological value of the specimens it contained, ranked among the greatest in the world. It was thrown open with the greatest liberality to students, fellow-collectors and connoisseurs from any and every part of the world without distinction beyond interest in that field, which Eumorfopoulos by the judicious use of his wealth in the service of his knowledge and his artistic judgment had made peculiarly his own.

Above everything Eumorfopoulos was anxious that so far as was possible others less fortunate than himself should share in the advantages for study that he enjoyed. A type collection of Chinese porcelain was formed by him and presented to the Museum at Athens, and his gifts to other museums were both numerous and valuable; but his greatest sacrifice was unquestionably the sale of his collection as a whole, which through his generosity in accepting a price far below its pecuniary value, became the property of the British nation in 1935. Now, though divided, it forms by far the most important part of the material available for the study and appreciation of the art of the Far East in the national collections.

Eumorfopoulos was also a generous supporter of all forms of archaeological investigation, but more especially if it showed likelihood of advancing knowledge of the history of art. As Sir Leonard Woolley

has recalled, he was a generous contributor to the funds for the excavation of Ur; and a visit to the site of the excavation was one of the few occasions on which he travelled in the East. Another which afforded him an even greater delight than that he experienced in Mesopotamia was when in 1935 he travelled in China with R. L. Hobson of the British Museum to help in selecting exhibits for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held in London in the following winter. The welcome he then received in China was such as befitted his eminence as a collector and expert, and was in a sense the crowning reward of his career.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. Czeslav Białobrzęski, professor of theoretical physics in the University of Warsaw recently executed by the German authorities in Poland, aged sixty years.

Sir John Withers, M.P., who has represented the University of Cambridge in Parliament since 1926, a former president of the Alpine Club and member of the Mount Everest Committee, on December 29, aged seventy-six years.

Prof. Hans Ziemann, professor of internal medicine in the University of Berlin, aged seventy-four years.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Seventy Years Ago

ON November 4, 1869, the first issue appeared of a new "weekly illustrated journal of science" entitled *NATURE*. It was under the able and forceful editorship of Sir Norman Lockyer, who secured the support of the leading men of science of the day for the new venture. Turning back in thought to those days, it will be seen that there is a certain parallelism between world affairs of that time and the present international situation. Prussia had defeated Austria and its German allies, and had emerged as a leading European power. Strategic railways had been built to the eastern and western frontiers, and tension between Germany and France increased until in July 1870 war was declared. The campaign was relatively short, but its consequences were momentous and had determined much of the history of the past half-century. It seemed worth while, therefore, to turn back to the early pages of *NATURE*, to note the reaction of scientific men and affairs to the course of events, and to observe the progress of science as recorded week by week in this journal. Let this be sufficient reason for the column of quotations and notes, taken from the first number of *NATURE* to appear in 1870, which is printed elsewhere in this issue (p. 41). It is proposed to publish week by week similar extracts from the issues of *NATURE* of "seventy years ago", in the hope that scientific workers will derive both profit and pleasure from these contemporary accounts of scientific thought and events.

Royal Meteorological Society: Symons Gold Medal

THE decision of the Council of the Royal Meteorological Society to award the Symons Gold Medal for 1940 to Dr. J. Bjerknes will be very popular among British meteorologists, to whom he has become well known during his frequent visits to this country. In 1932 the Medal was awarded to his father, Prof. V. Bjerknes, and it is fitting that the son, who shared the work, should also share the honours. Dr. J. Bjerknes is well known for his numerous and penetrating memoirs on the structure of barometric depressions and on the mechanism of the atmospheric

circulation. Among his earlier papers we may mention "On the Structure of Moving Cyclones" (1919), and (with H. Solberg) "Meteorological Conditions for the Formation of Rain" (1921), and "The Life Cycle of Cyclones and the Polar Front Theory of Atmospheric Circulation" (1922) in which he laid down the principle of 'cyclone families' and emphasized the role taken by depressions as an integral part of the exchange of air between high and low latitudes.

Later, while temporarily on the staff of the British Meteorological Office, Dr. Bjerknes compiled "Practical Examples of Polar-Front Analysis over the British Isles in 1925-6", published as Geophysical Memoir No. 50, and he has since analysed in great detail, on the bases of both surface and upper air observations, a number of depressions presenting special features. In 1933 the accumulated research of the Norwegian school of meteorologists into the dynamics of the atmosphere was published in book form under the title "Physikalische Hydrodynamik" by V. and J. Bjerknes, H. Solberg and T. Bergeron. Dr. Bjerknes is still young, and we look forward to further important research in future from these brilliant Norwegians.

University of Oxford: Chair of Forestry

MR. H. G. CHAMPION has recently been appointed to fill the chair of forestry at Oxford in succession to the late Prof. R. S. Troup. Mr. Champion graduated at Oxford with first-class honours in chemistry and botany. He went out to India in the Forest Service in 1915 and was posted to the United Provinces. After successful work in divisional and working plans posts he was selected for appointment as silviculturist at the Forestry Institute at Dehra Dun. In this post he carried out some notable work. Perhaps Mr. Champion's most important contributions to silvicultural research in India and Burma were a "Silvicultural Research Manual for India", in two volumes—"The Experimental Manual" and "The Statistical Code"—and a "Preliminary Survey of the Forest Types in India and Burma".